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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Items 25 and 43 of the preliminary list\*

QUESTION OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS (MALVINAS)

IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 37/71

CONCERNING THE SIGNATURE AND RATIFICATION OF  
ADDITIONAL PROTOCOL I OF THE TREATY FOR THE  
PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN LATIN  
AMERICA (TREATY OF TLAHELCO)

Letter dated 16 July 1983 from the Chargé d'Affaires a.i.  
of the Permanent Mission of Argentina to the United Nations  
addressed to the Secretary-General

On express instructions from my Government, I have the honour to write you with reference to the "Question of the Malvinas" and the serious turn that question is taking as a result of the latest measures adopted by the authorities of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

On numerous occasions, my Government has drawn your attention and that of the international community to the incompatibility between the policy of the United Kingdom Government regarding the Malvinas, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations concerning the peaceful settlement of international disputes, Security Council resolution 505 (1982) and General Assembly resolution 37/9, which expressly requested the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom to seek a peaceful and negotiated solution to the sovereignty dispute. In particular, my Government has repeatedly drawn attention to the fact that the British militarization of the disputed territories is a decisive factor in the persistence of tension and instability in the South Atlantic.

In this connection, I would draw your attention to the statements made by Mr. Michael Heseltine, the British Secretary of State for Defence, in the

\* A/38/50/Rev.1.

House of Commons on 27 June 1983, concerning his Government's decision to build a new strategic airfield for civil and military use in the Malvinas at March Ridge about 30 kilometres from Puerto Argentino. The work is expected to begin in October 1983 and to be completed in 1986. It will be carried out by a consortium formed by of the British companies Mowlem, Laing and Amey Roadstone Construction, which will employ 1,400 workers to build this military infrastructure facility; the workers and the materials will be transported to the Malvinas using Cape Town, South Africa, as a logistical support base. The new airfield will have two runways, one 8,500 feet long and the other 5,000 feet long and will be capable of taking wide bodied aircraft.

The decision of the British Government to build in the Malvinas an airfield whose characteristics leave no doubt as to the intention to instal a permanent military air base in the territory constitutes a marked escalation in the policy of provocation vis-à-vis Argentina, which will have consequences not only within the strict confines of the sovereignty dispute but also within the broader context of the security of the Latin American region, since these measures clearly go beyond the alleged defence requirements of the islands.

In effect, the construction of a military airfield, combined with the intention - which has not been denied - of establishing in the islands a naval base capable of accommodating and supplying warships and nuclear submarines, shows that the United Kingdom, a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and a nuclear Power, plans to incorporate the territories usurped from Argentina in a strategic design of global character and implications which includes the introduction of nuclear weapons into the zone and confirms the British Government's disregard for the interests of Latin America in the field of peace and security. It likewise confirms that the United Kingdom has no intention of solving its dispute with Argentina peacefully or of co-operating in the decolonization of the South Atlantic territories, since the only explanation for this project is the determination of the United Kingdom to perpetuate its colonial presence in the islands.

It is likewise clear that the so-called defence of granting the inhabitants the right of self-determination, advanced repeatedly by the United Kingdom Government, is merely a pretext for concealing the latter's real strategic intentions, which could cause unforeseeable changes in the very character of a large geographical region where extracontinental Powers have not thus far established a massive military presence.

The serious consequences that are bound to ensue from the decision to establish the airfield have been foreseen even in the United Kingdom itself, where responsible circles have correctly interpreted this new measure as evidence of the British Government's lack of will to settle the dispute with Argentina in accordance with the provisions of the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. The provocative policy of the British Government is even less justifiable in the light of the Argentine Government's repeated offers to co-operate in the search for a negotiated and peaceful solution to all the problems linked to the sovereignty dispute.

Consequently, the Argentine Government considers it unacceptable that the United Kingdom, by a series of unilateral acts, should alter the current status quo of the islands, and that other Governments should contribute to such action, since that will strengthen a position which reduces the possibility of negotiations to resolve the conflict.

I would request you to have this note circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under items 25 and 43 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council, and to bring it to the attention of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

(Signed) Victor E. BEAUGE  
Minister  
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.  
of the Permanent Mission of Argentina  
to the United Nations

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